

Man charged in shooting at hall
Police, relative of victim disagree over how killing occurred

January 4, 2006
BY DAN CORTEZ
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Two stories are emerging after a shooting early Sunday at a Warren banquet hall left one Detroit man dead and another fighting for his life.

Meanwhile, the man Warren police suspect pulled the trigger is being held in lieu of a \$5-million bond. Daryl L. Waldon, 20, of Detroit was arraigned Tuesday in 37th District Court in Warren on one charge of second-degree murder, two counts of assault with intent to murder and three felony firearm charges. He could face life in prison if convicted.

Warren Police Sgt. Michael Torey said Tuesday the story police are hearing from witnesses is that Waldon had some interaction with one of the victims before the shooting.

Police said Waldon shot and killed Anthony McCommons, 27, at Araden Hall, 8569 Eight Mile Road, about 2:30 a.m. Sunday, after a fight on the dance floor amid 200 partiers.

A 20-year-old man who also was shot was in critical but stable condition Tuesday. A third victim -- a 17-year-old girl from Detroit -- was treated for a leg wound and released.

McCommons' family disputes the police account.

Christol McCommons, 32, said Tuesday she was with her brother, standing in a circle with about 30 family members near the hall's bathrooms, when gunfire rang out.

"We were not even close to the dance floor," she said. "We were by the bathroom. The guy pulled a gun out and started shooting. My brother just happened to be one of the guys who caught a bullet."

The story buzzing around Araden Hall, Christol McCommons said, was that the 20-year-old victim -- whom police have not identified -- had a long-running beef with Waldon. When Waldon saw the man, he pulled a gun and started shooting.

Warren police, who talked with witnesses and the surviving victims, said at least one of the victims picked Waldon as the shooter from a photo lineup. Waldon is due back in court Jan. 17, and was to be held at the Macomb County Jail.

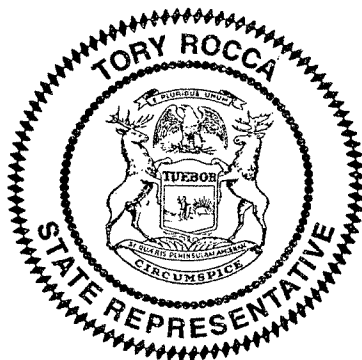
City spokesman Joe Munem and Warren Councilwoman Mindy Moore -- who has been vocal in trying to shut down the hall because of past violence -- attended Waldon's arraignment. The city has been trying to get a judge to issue an order to close the hall.

"If this doesn't constitute a nuisance, I don't know what does," Munem said.

The owners of the hall declined to comment Monday on the prior incidents.

Christol McCommons said her brother doted on his 3-year-old daughter and was a father-figure to his four sisters.

"There was nothing they could say bad about him," she said. "He was a family guy."



Warren officials target hall for closing
City wants social club, scene of fatal shooting New Year's Day, padlocked as a public nuisance.
1/04/2006
Edward L. Cardenas / The Detroit News

WARREN-- Warren officials are renewing efforts to shut down a social hall on Eight Mile that was the site of a fatal shooting early New Year's Day. Councilwoman Mindy Moore and Mayor Mark Steenbergh are calling for the closure of the Araden Hall following the Jan. 1 shooting of three people, one fatally, at the club on Eight Mile just east of Van Dyke. "We intend to be back in Circuit Court to shut this place down," said Joe Munem, spokesman for Steenbergh. Moore began her effort in December 2004 in response to repeated police runs and several shootings at Araden Hall. The city filed a lawsuit against the hall's owners, and it was temporarily closed as owners worked to get it into compliance with building codes. The hall reopened recently; it was closed again after the most recent shooting. "The neighbors are scared to death," Moore said. "We've tried to get justice through civil action. These owners are not getting the message." Patty Murszewski, who has lived in her neighborhood behind Araden Hall for the past 58 years, said the club has been a problem for a long time. "The hall holds only 250 people," she said. "But they'll sell 1,000 tickets for a cabaret there. People have to wait to get in, they start drinking in the parking lot and that's what starts all the violence." The owners of the hall, David and Fred Rayes, could not be reached for comment Tuesday. The pair had been scheduled to appear in 37th District Court on disorderly premises charges Tuesday, but the hearing was adjourned until Jan. 31 because of the weekend shooting. The New Year's shooting occurred about 2:30 a.m. Sunday. Daryl Waldon is alleged to have opened fire in the hall, which was filled with about 250 New Year's Eve revelers who spent between \$15 and \$20 to attend. Three people were shot, police said. Anthony McCommons, 27, of Detroit was shot in the abdomen and died later in the day. Waldon was arrested about 10 a.m. Sunday at his mother's house in Detroit. He was charged in 37th District Court on charges of second-degree murder, two counts of attempted murder and three counts of felony firearm possession. If convicted, he could spend up to life in prison.

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Council Member Works to Close Hall After Fatal Shooting

By Anu Prakash

Web produced by Sarah Morgan

January 3, 2006

Tuesday, a member of Warren city council worked to shut down a hall that hosted a deadly New Year's Eve party.

20-year-old Daryl Waldon could spend the rest of his life in prison for allegedly shooting 3 people at Araden Hall in Warren. One of the victims died.

In the past, Araden Hall has been the site of several shootings and more than 100 police runs.

Warren City Council member Mindy Moore said the hall is a public nuisance and she wants the owners held responsible.

"They have not done anything to make it safer and somebody lost their life. There's a grieving family, there's somebody laying in the hospital in critical condition. The neighbors are very fearful. They've had bullets they've have to dig out of their front porches. They're scared to death," she said.

Moore plans to ask the mayor and city attorney to petition for the immediate closure of Araden Hall.

The hall was temporarily closed, but was reopened because it complied with building codes and properly petitioned for a certificate of occupancy.

Reverend Ronald Waldon said something also needs to be done about the violence, "We need to do something. As ministers, men of God, women of God, churches, we need to come out and help our youth."

Daryl Waldon was arraigned on Tuesday and was being held on a \$5 million bond.

After the arraignment his family along with families of the victim prayed together.

Reverend Waldon said, "I told them, would it be okay after we left the courtroom, that we have prayer. And that's one thing I want to do is have prayer with the victim's family."

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Rental hall ordered closed

■ Judge shuts Warren social hall where New Year's revelers were shot.

By Norb Franz

Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A judge has ordered shut a Warren social hall where three people were shot on New Year's Eve.

The temporary restraining order means Araden Hall, on Eight Mile Road near Van Dyke, will be closed for 14 days.

A lawyer representing hall operators Fred and David Rayes said his clients are "totally disappointed" by the move.

"We'll deal with it in the courtroom," attorney Salvatore Palombo said.

Macomb County Circuit Judge Diane Druzinski issued the temporary restraining order late Friday afternoon after attorneys for the city of Warren filed a motion earlier in the day.

Warren Mayor Mark Steenbergh called the ruling a victory for residents.

"We have a duty to protect the residents from this kind of nuisance. We can breathe a little easier knowing Araden Hall can't conduct business this weekend," he said.

The move was the latest attempt to fight a business that Warren officials describe as a public nuisance and comes on the heels of the shootings that left one New Year's partygoer dead.

Police said a bump on the dance floor led to shoves, at least one punch and quickly erupted in gunfire and pandemonium among nearly 250 people packed inside the social hall around 2:30 a.m. Sunday.

Anthony DeJuan McCommons, 27, of Detroit, died later that morning. A 17-year-old girl was shot through the thigh, and was treated and released from a local hospital.

The third victim, Erron Daakar Purry, 20, suffered four gunshot wounds to his upper right side. He remains hospitalized, but doctors upgraded his

If someone wants to violate the law, they're going to violate the law. A regimen of police officers may not stop them. This is the real world.

— Salvatore Palombo, attorney

condition to stable, Warren Detective Sgt. Michael Torey said.

The accused gunman, 20-year-old Daryl Lenard Waldon of Detroit, is charged with second-degree murder, two counts of assault with intent to commit murder and three counts of felony firearm possession.

A preliminary hearing in the shooting is scheduled for Jan. 17 in 37th District Court in Warren. The same day, lawyers for the city and Araden Hall will head to circuit court, where Warren officials will argue for a preliminary injunction that would keep the beleaguered business closed significantly longer.

"There is a pattern and practice by the owners of this hall to carry on the operation of this business recklessly, with complete disregard to the city of Warren and the safety of its citizens," City Attorney George Constance said.

"They're as irresponsible and reckless this year as they were last year."

In January 2005, the city sued the rental hall's operators in an attempt to have it deemed a public nuisance and closed. Judge Druzinski ordered the rental hall closed because it lacked a valid certificate of occupancy. The business closed in July, and the judge allowed it to re-open in November after building code violations were corrected and a valid occupancy permit was obtained.

The city's nuisance arguments from last year are pending. However, Constance said city officials don't want to wait for a trial in that lawsuit in the effort to close Araden Hall, and thus are seeking the preliminary injunction to keep it closed.

Warren police have had more

than 100 runs to the hall in the past two years, officials said.

How a partygoer was able to get a gun onto the dance floor last weekend is unclear. Palombo said anyone renting the hall is required to provide security personnel and pointed out that Fred and David Rayes use their own staff to monitor activities. He added the brothers also hire off-duty police officers for security inside the building, in the parking lot and along Eight Mile Road to monitor traffic.

The New Year's Eve bash included uniformed security guards hired by the person that sold tickets for the party. The guards were not armed with guns and used hand-held metal detectors to check people for weapons, Palombo said.

The attorney called the New Year's Eve shooting a tragedy.

"People have gotten into police stations with guns. People have gotten into courthouses with guns," he said. "If someone wants to violate the law, they're going to violate the law. A regimen of police officers may not stop them. This is the real world. People get on airplanes with guns and knives."

Araden Hall does not have a liquor license and does not serve alcoholic beverages. Customers frequently have hosted parties in which guests are permitted to bring their own drinks, a practice permitted under state law.

"It's really the height of stupidity for any property owner, let alone a hall owner, to allow the general public to come in and bring their own booze in with them," said Constance, the city attorney.

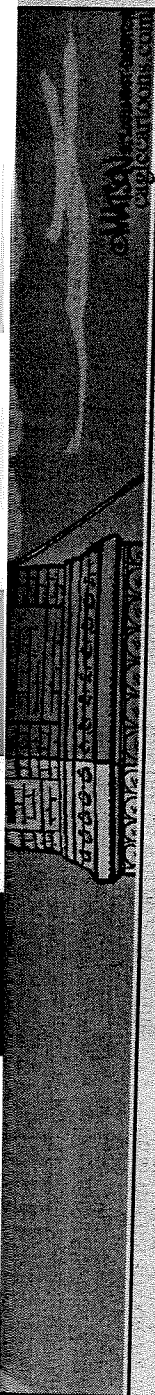
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EDITORIALS

Warren should crack down on hall to protect residents

Rent a hall that can hold more than 200 people.

Hire a disc jockey to play dance music.

Sell tickets to anyone who wants to attend.

Allow them to bring in their own alcohol.

It's a recipe for disaster.

And that's what happened — again — at Arden Hall in Warren on New Year's Eve.

Two men got into an argument in the crowded hall. Police say one pulled a gun and shot three people, killing one.

"We're definitely lucky that more weren't injured," said Warren Detective Sgt. Michael Torey.

The circumstances surrounding the shooting spree are further evidence that Warren city officials acted properly

when they moved to close the facility last year when a gun fight broke out in the parking lot at the hall.

While we loath government restrictions on business, if the hall's owner and management can't or won't address the problems, the government — both local and state — must step in to protect residents and their investments in the area.

It's not as though the most recent shooting is the first incident of its kind at the hall. Warren police say they have been called to the hall 100 times in the last two years.

Last year the city of Warren sued the hall's operators, claiming their business was a public nuisance. Macomb County Circuit Judge Diane Druzinski ordered the business closed because it lacked a certificate of occupancy.

The hall remained closed for about five months, but Druzinski allowed it to reopen about a month ago after operators brought it into compliance with city ordinances.

Warren City Councilwoman Melinda Moore, who led the push last year to close the hall, now wants city officials to direct the city attorney's office to draft an ordinance regulating social halls and banquet facilities.

That's a step in the right direction.

If a local ordinance is not enough, state lawmakers should review liquor regulations to prevent uncontrolled drinking of alcohol in rented halls.

One person is dead and another faces a possible sentence of life in prison. It's past the time for action.

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